

Executive Summary: Town Hall Meetings 2018

Puerto Rico Police Bureau's (PRPB) Reform

Constitutional Legal Advisors to the Federal Monitor

Executive Summary: Pursuant to the directives of the Court, the Federal Monitor along with the Constitutional Legal Advisors and the parties of the case held a total of seven (7) town hall meetings across the Island during the year 2018. The following summary relies on the minutes of each town hall meeting taken by Mr. José L. Pujol, and follows the general outline of the Agreement for the Sustainable Reform as filed in Docket No. 60, hereinafter “the Agreement”. The main purpose of the summary is to offer a concise view of the main issues and concerns brought by the participants across all town hall meetings within the context of the Agreement. We note that some input is repeated in more than one section due to its shared pertinence across these sections. Also, not all topics covered by the Agreement were subject of discussion in the town hall meetings. This represents an opportunity to raise these subjects in future town hall meetings.

- **Town halls held in the year 2018:**

- Ponce, July 18
- Caguas, August 16
- Fajardo, August 18
- Bayamón, September 17
- Arecibo, October 24
- Guayama, November 8
- Mayaguez, December 5

- **The audience:**

The overall composition of the audience that participated in the town hall meetings was as follows:

- Community/Group representatives: **51**
- Citizens: **28**
- Public Officials: **6** (Participants)
- Overall audience present: **500+** (Including police officers)

<p>I. PROFESSIONALIZATION</p> <p>A. Staffing and Community Policing</p> <p>B. Promotions</p> <p>C. CommanderCorps</p>	<p>There was an overwhelming demand across all participants to improve officers¹ work conditions: salaries, resources (Equipment); better retirement plan; incentives to enable them to better perform their duties. In particular, there is a general consensus on the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dire police station conditions
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¹ The terms police officer, agent, policeman is used interchangeably in this summary. No distinction should be made

AGREEMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE REFORM
OF THE PUERTO RICO. POLICE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TOWN HALLS 2018
U.S. V. COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, ET. AL.

CASE NO. 12-2039

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No promotion opportunities due to politicized command chain. ▪ Broken cars, radios, etc. ▪ Unreasonable transfer undertaken as retaliation ▪ Long work shifts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The need to overcome the situation with costly police equipment due to overcharging (price hike) by government suppliers because of the high risk of not getting paid in time, or not paid at all, by the government. <p>Note: Participants at various Town Hall Meetings raised concerns regarding the lack of officers and patrols where people live and work at. The panel took the opportunity to discuss Paragraph 13 in response to these questions and concerns.</p>
<p>II. USE OF FORCE: INTERNAL CONTROLS AND ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>A. General Use of Force</p> <p>B. Specialized Tactical Units</p> <p>Crowd Control and Incident</p> <p>C. Crowd control and Incident</p> <p>E. Force Review, Investigation and Analysis</p> <p>F. Supervisory and FRB Reviews</p> <p>G. FIU Investigation and Force Reviews by SFRB</p> <p>H. Use of Force Training</p> <p>Responding to Behavioral/Mental Health Crisis [intervention with mentally impaired citizens]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police officers need to be trained on how to intervene and handle situations involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ – Disabled persons (hearing or visually impaired or blind and persons with developmental disabilities. ○ - Homeless ○ - Drug addicts ○ - Mental Health/Illness patients
<p>III. SEARCHES AND SEIZURES: INTERNAL CONTROLS AND ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>A. Stops, Searches, and Seizures Generally</p>	<p><i>[no specific input]</i></p>

<p>B. Investigatory Stops and Searches C. Arrests D. Searches Training on Stops, Searches and Seizures</p>	
<p>IV. EQUAL PROTECTION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION</p> <p>A. General Provisions B. Discriminatory Policing C. Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need for faster reaction time and support for domestic violence victims under court issued protective orders. More preventive patrolling near their residence. (The Carolina Municipal Police action plan was given as an example to follow). ○ Too many domestic violence cases within the police officer's family, including cohabitants or partners. ○ Selective enforcement involving residents of public housing projects.
<p>V. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND HIRING</p> <p>A. Recruitment Plan B. Hiring Reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overwhelming demand for more police officers performing preventive patrolling in the street. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restart the Police Academy ▪ Consolidation of Police Stations worsens their crime deterrence projection
<p>VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overwhelming request for more support and expansion of the Police Athletic League. There is a consensus of the important work the League does with the youth, and the crime prevention benefits it brings. Needs better funding, it keeps the youth in sports and community engagement. This makes them better adults in the near future. ○ PRPB mission scope too broad (protect life, enforce the law, traffic accidents, disaster relief, security in private events [concerts etc.], custody of victims, transit, protective orders, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates a high stress work environment within terrible work conditions and compensation

AGREEMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE REFORM
OF THE PUERTO RICO. POLICE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TOWN HALLS 2018
U.S. V. COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, ET. AL.

CASE NO. 12-2039

	<p>which affects agent's performance and interaction with the citizens, victims and even their own family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Re-focus law enforcement strategy with drug addicts into a public health problem that needs proper treatment (under the premise that addiction is an illness) instead of putting them in jail. Enforce the law on the drug traffickers. o More focus on prevention programs is needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work towards an image of the police as a friend ▪ Educate cadets on prevention methods; community interaction /work ▪ Develop internships in community groups. ▪ Outreach citizens and organizations
<p>VII. TRAINING</p> <p>A. Pre-Service Education and Training</p> <p>B. Field Training Program</p> <p>C. In-Service Training Records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Police officers need to be trained on how to intervene and handle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disabled persons(hearing and visually impaired or blind and persons with developmental disabilities. ▪ Homeless ▪ Drug addicts ▪ Mental health patients o Privatize the Police Academy or make a Public-Private Alliance so that universities can train new officers and therefore have access to federal funds (Pell Grant), reducing the cost to virtually free. o <i>Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente (MAVI)</i> offered to train agents on sign language for free. o <i>Defensoría de Personas con</i>

	<i>Impedimentos</i> also offered support to the PRPB with sign language.
<p>VIII. SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>A. Duties of Supervisors</p> <p>B. Supervisor Training</p> <p>C. Performance Evaluation</p> <p>D. Early Identification System</p> <p>E. Internal Audits and Interagency Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Serious concern and demand for psychological and emotional support for police officers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently agents aren't getting adequate support and are discouraged from using inter PRPB channels to seek help for fear of discrimination. ▪ Too many domestic violence cases involving PRPB officers. o Lack of public trust on the PRPB command, specifically on the Director of the Department of Public Security (Pesquera). Real support from the central government needed. o There is an ongoing concern of the use of transfers to distant work places by the PRPB as a retaliatory action against agents who complaint about their work conditions. o Good example of a public-private alliance: the <i>Corporation of Medical Services</i> are set to sign an agreement with the Arecibo PRPB to provide medical and mental support for agents (regardless of health insurance). It is hoped that with this "outside" channel, agents will be encouraged to seek mental health support.

<p>IX. CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS, INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS, AND DISCIPLINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Civilian Complaints B. Internal Investigations C. Complaint Intake, Classification, Assignment, and Tracking D. Investigation of Complaints E. Staffing, Selection, and Training Requirements F. Preventing Retaliation G. Discipline Officer Assistance and Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Agents must lead by example in terms of observing traffic laws and helping citizens. This greatly improves their image and standing with the community. o Too many domestic violence cases involving PRPB officers
<p>X. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Community Oriented Policing B. Community Interaction Councils Public Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o More support and expansion of the Police Athletic League is needed. There is a unified consensus of the important work the League does with the youth, and the crime prevention benefits it brings. Needs better funding, it keeps the youth in sports and community engagement. This makes them better adults in the near future. o General lack of knowledge by both citizens and agents themselves about the Reform and their role needs to be addressed. <p>PR Housing Agency needs to get involved in the Town Halls and the Reform (within the context of Residential/ Housing Projects (complex).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Citizens' Interaction Committee (CIC) needs the following to accomplish its mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better cooperation from the PRPB's Reform team ▪ Better organization ▪ More resources ▪ Continuous training/education ▪ Access to administrative complaints filed by citizens in

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION (Cont.)

- the PRPB
- A national annual meeting
 - Accountability system for PRPB officers that hinder the Reform
 - PRPB and USDOJ/Federal government needs to have a unified voice and keep the bickering and internal fights out of the public.
 - PRPB's Office of Community Relations needs better support and staffing.
 - Preventive patrolling needed in Housing Projects, **the youth need to see the police as allies and not only when they visit to execute search warrants and arrests.**
 - *Alianzas Comunitarias Cidreñas Inc.* is an example of good community work along with the PRPB.
 - CIC work and progress in the municipalities seems to vary but is having a good result in the communities in general. Need more support as mentioned above.
 - Shield Program (federal funded) is praised. The program provides help to the PRPB in domestic violence cases. Currently working only in the east municipalities of PR.
- Citizens are interested to join the Auxiliary Police force, orientation is needed. Interamerican University-Fajardo Campus, signaled willingness to work with community groups.
- Community group: *Comunidades de la Alianza Norte*, used to undertake successful community work of crime prevention, but cooperation from the PRPB's Office of Community Relations has worsened. Communications failed.
 - Increase public awareness of:

XI. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND
PUBLIC INFORMATION (Cont.)

▪ *Basta a la Violencia Campaign.*

- The good work done by the Division of Relations with the Community.
- Use the local media to put forth a positive campaign of the work done by the PRPB and role of citizens

More education and outreach at the schools.

XI. INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND
TECHNOLOGY

[no specific input]

Additional feedback received from the Town Hall Meetings:

- **General concerns:** these concerns are presented without regard to a particular order or priority:
 - Inoperable traffic lights in busy intersections remain a serious safety issue.
 - USDOJ Civil Rights year 2011 report on the PRPD situation is outdated, Hurricane Maria and PROMESA Law have changed the landscape. These issues need to be revisited.
- **Specific situations brought by the audience:**
 - Municipality of Culebra: they have no Municipal Police force and must rely on PRPB's stationed agents. Therefore, shortage of agents is felt even more. Drug trafficking is rampant and the police force patrolling the island lacks reliable radio and communications with the local police station.
 - Municipality of Vieques: Also suffering of drug trafficking because of the use of the island to bring drugs from the Americas. Lowest policeman to resident ratio. Only 1 patrol car for the entire island. Highest murder ratio. Needs more federal agents (only one (1) stationed).
 - University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus (RUM): Students are victims of assault and carjacking.
- **Suggestions and Support Offered:**

AGREEMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE REFORM
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U.S. V. COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, ET. AL.

CASE NO. 12-2039

- Crowd funding a police pay raise by citizens.
- Orientation of agents on the Shopping Center Trespassing Law
- Need for a detailed status report of the PRPB to this date and submit findings to the Legislative Branch² for more funding.
- The Mayor of Arecibo suggests unifying all Municipal Police forces with the PRPB force into one Police Agency to increase efficiency.
- Re-think ongoing protocol for handling car accidents. More flexibility and common sense is needed.
- Mini-police stations near municipality limits would reduce response time to complaints/crime. Normally, police stations are located near the town center. This problem is exacerbated in central mountain towns.
- The need to have available 4x4 type patrol cars in the mountain regions.
- Allow policemen to pray.

² The word *Congress* was used in the original notes.